

From the Archives...Awarding Contracts

The price tag for the construction of Buford Dam would be over 44 million dollars. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was not just given the entire amount and told, go build a dam, they had to request money from Congress each year for the next year's work. It was a fact that the construction of the dam pumped millions of dollars into the local economy. This money found its way to people in the form of wages paid for workers, sales of goods and services for these workers, taxes paid to local, state, and federal governments as a result of the spending.

Although the work was supervised by the Corps of Engineers the majority of that work was contracted, even sub contracted, out to private companies who would bid on individual jobs. Specifications for work were drawn up by government engineers with private companies awarded contracts based on price and the work being guaranteed as a result of winning the bid. The contracts were all part of public record with bids usually opened in the Savannah District or South Atlantic Division Office.

Fiscal Year Appropriations for Buford Dam

1950 - \$750,000.00	1955 - \$9,300,000.00
1951 - \$900,000.00	1956 - \$11,830,000.00
1952 - \$900,000.00	1957 - \$4,553,000.00
1953 - \$3,000,000.00	1958 - \$572,000.00
1954 - \$7,500,000.00	1959 - \$2,560,902.00
1960 - \$1,524,613.00	

(Fig. 1) Each year listed is the Fiscal Year appropriation. Each fiscal year appropriation begins on July 1st of the previous year and ends on June 30th of the present year. For example, the 1950 Fiscal Year appropriation begins July 1, 1949 and ends June 30, 1950.

Fig. 1

This process for funding public works projects then is much the same way it is funded today. Congress would appropriate money for Fiscal Years (Fig. 1). A fiscal

year is any 12 month period at the end of which business accounts are balanced. Each fiscal year appropriation would be used for the construction needs for that fiscal year. Congressional appropriations for Fiscal Year 1950 would be used to pay for all construction from July 1, 1949 to June 30, 1950. This is a simplified method of explaining a terribly complicated process but explains how the government allocated money for nearly a decade for not only Buford Dam but projects all over the United States.

On March 1, 1950 the Mobile District Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded a contract to H.M. Rodgers and Son of Memphis, Tennessee to construct Saddle Dike No. 3 (*Fig. 2 & 3*) and the Spillway (*Fig. 4 & 5*) for \$297,627.00.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

At left in (*Fig. 2*) Saddle Dike No.3 on November 30, 1950 is under construction. *Courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* At right in (*Fig. 3*) you see the completed Saddle Dike No. 3 as it appears today. *Courtesy RDC Productions* Notice (*Fig. 2*) the lake will not appear for eight years.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

At left in (*Fig. 4*) you can see the excavation of the spillway in progress on April 20, 1951. *Courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* At right (*Fig. 5*) you see how the spillway appears today. *Courtesy RDC Productions* It was designed to never be used and to date it hasn't.

This was one of the first contracts awarded to a company to complete work for the project. Many other contracts would be bid on and awarded in the next eight years. On June 7, 1951 the Mobile District awarded a contract to Groves, Lundin and Cox Inc. of Minneapolis, Minnesota for the Forebay and Tailrace excavations (which they sub-contracted out), Saddle Dike No. 1 & 2 and a construction access road for \$2,836,712.00. That same year on 11-02-1951 \$1,224,295.00 was awarded to James Leffer and Company of Springfield, Ohio to provide hydraulic turbines for the powerhouse.

Two years later on March 16, 1953 the Corps of Engineers awarded a Memphis, Tennessee company, L.A. Tyedt Contractors \$552,179.00 to excavate the power and sluice tunnels. The intake structure and sluice construction (*Fig. 6*) was awarded to J.A. Jones Construction Company on October 22, 1953 for the sum of \$2,011,402.00. A

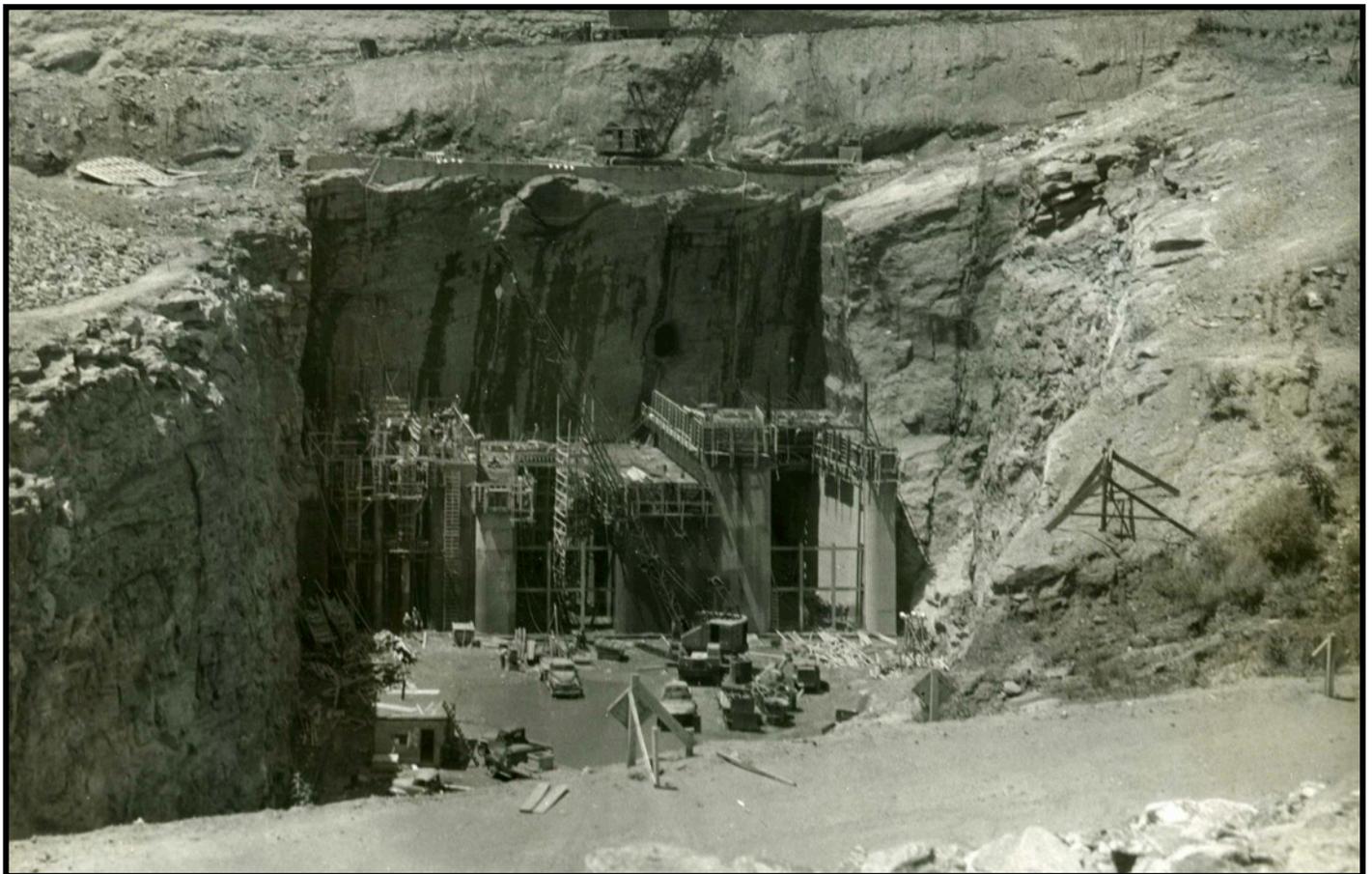


Fig. 6

(*Fig. 6*) The intake structure moves up the Forebay cut. Workers would set the wooden forms in place during the day and pour concrete during the evening hours. During the early construction years two 12 hour shifts accomplished most of the work completed on the project. *Courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District*

little over three months later on March 1, 1954 the Corps of Engineers awarded \$1,487,425.00 to J.W Moorman and Son of Muskogee, Oklahoma to construct the main earth dam. One of the first bridges that would span the main Chattahoochee River channel, Brown's Bridge, would see a contract, for its concrete and steel substructure (Fig. 7) as well as the relocation of Highway 141 (later changed to 369) that would serve the bridge, awarded to a Greenville, South Carolina agency. The C.Y. Thomason Company was awarded a contract on July 15, 1954 for \$421,088.00 to finish the work.

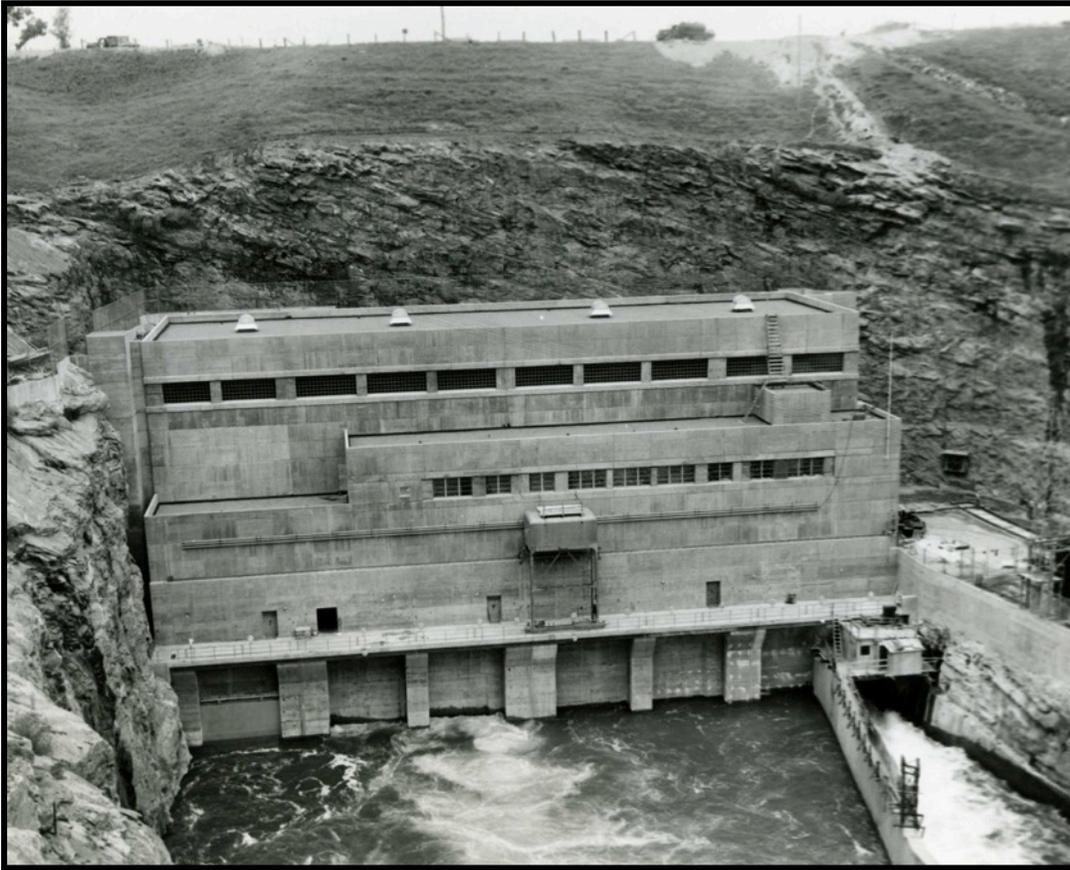
(Fig. 7) On May 6, 1955 you see the concrete substructure for Brown's Bridge is completed. Soon the steel superstructure will be erected on top of the concrete support piers. You are looking toward the Forsyth County abutment of the bridge.



Fig. 7

The powerhouse (Fig. 8), hydro electric switchyard and transformer yard were all part of the same contract awarded to Ivey Brothers Construction Company, Inc. of Atlanta, Georgia for \$3,076,138.00 on May 9, 1955. Bids for these contracts were sealed and opened at a prescribed time by the Savannah District Office. Usually the low bidder would be awarded the contract but there were other factors that determined the outcome such as the company's ability to complete the work as specified on time and at the price submitted. Other factors that could affect the final decision could be the financial solvency of the firm and its past work records.

Fig. 8



(Fig. 8) Buford Dam Powerhouse on June 20, 1957 shortly after the first power unit went on-line and electrical power was generated and transferred to the switchyard for resale. Power had been generated several weeks earlier but it was kept in house and used to dry out the generator insulators. *Courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District*

Not all work contracted out, involved building something. Numerous bids were for modified reservoir clearing operations. This would insure the Corps of Engineers that land and other property being purchased by the government for the reservoir was actually cleared of unwanted debris. On July 1, 1955 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded a contract for just such a clearing operation (Fig. 9) to the Wade Lahar Construction Company of Mountain Home, Arkansas for \$1,611,560.00.

Fig. 9



(Fig. 9) Reservoir clearing using a bulldozer not long before impoundment began in 1956. *Courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District*